A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, July 19. 1712.

I Always thought it was the Right of *English-Men*, to have Liberty to ſpeak freely, in Things relating to their General Intereſt, only with this juſt reſtraint, *viz.* That they ſpoke TRUTH, but I never thought that Liberty extended to a general Latitude of Forging what Stories they thought fit, and ſpeaking by their own Authority whatever they pleas'd, without reſpect to Matters of Fact; the Juſtice of our Nation is Eminent for Correcting the Manners of the Age, and tho' there may be a deficiency in our Law, that a Man cannot be puniſh'd for Lying, yet he may certainly be puniſh'd for *Printing Lies*; ſpreading falſe News is puniſhable by ſeveral Statutes, and thoſe particular Laws well known; nor is this any breach of the Liberty of the Subject, for doubtleſs Liberty of Speech, which is a *Britiſh* Priviledge, extends no farther than to ſpeak Truth; otherwiſe we pretend to reckon the Liberty of Lying to be a Priviledge of an *Engliſh-Man*.

I ſpeak this with a Melancholly Retroſpect to the Sin of the Day, in which, raiſing and publiſhing meer Fictions, meer Forgeries of our own, and ſpreading them about for News, to pleaſe or ſerve the Parties we are Concern'd for, is grown ſo general a Practice, that indeed it is become the Jeſt of the Town, and 'tis the common greeting now in a Morning; Well, Neighbour, *What News?* Truly ſays t'other, I am but juſt come, *I don't know*, pray, What is the *Lye* of the Week? Or what is the *LIE* Courant *for the Day?* What a wretched Poſture are we come to, that

that receive Lies, knowing or believing them to be so, and please ourselves with them, to confront one another, and make good the Scandal we deal in?

It would be too dirty a piece of Work, to rake in the General Laystall of Parties, and expose the Wretched Particulars; How do our News-Writers carry on the Wicked War, and throw Lyes at one another every Post, just as our Boys throw Dirt at one another in the Street; to come off of this we have a New Invention, for what cannot our Projectors for Hell do in that Case? *Viz.* To dress up a formal Story, and call it *a Letter from Holland*; the Concern whether it be true or no, *is then no more upon us*, it is a Story left on the Reputation of some body Abroad.

This way we have every Post a Packet of such forged Stuff, as well of one Side as the other, that it is intolerable; I clear none of the Parties of it, the Crime is General; and what's *the Lye of the Week now?* Alass, this very Week has been so fruitful of *Lyes*, that it is hard to determine; but I think the Lye of the greatest Magnitude, the Master Lye that came over this Post, at the Head of the Swarm, may be allow'd to be that, of the Duke of *Ormond*'s Army burning a Church, and burning 270 of the poor People, Inhabitants of the Village, alive in it, not suffering them to come out; Is this Story likely to be true? Do *English-Men* use to do thus? Is the Duke of *Ormond* of such a Bloody Barbarous Disposition? —— This I could not omit taking notice of —— And what a Day do we live in, that such a piece of News will go down with us? We had another Coin'd in the same Mint a while ago, *viz.* That a certain Gentleman told the Deputies of *the States* in a Conference, that if the *States* did not comply with her Majesty's Measures, and agree to a Cessation within 48 Hours, the *British* Troops would all join the *French* Army: *Another*, that Prince *Eugene* had orderd all the Governours of the Towns in *Flanders*, not to admit any *English-Men* into the Towns; the first is Contradicted by Matter of Fact, and the last is Contradicted by this Post, by an Account Printed in the *Post-Man, the only Impartial Paper we have left*; the *English* Officers having in their March, been receiv'd at *Lisle, Tournay, &c.* with all possible Civility, and an Excuse made by Baron *Hompesch* Governour of *Doway*, and by Prince *Eugene* himself, for the Incivility of some Refusal at *Doway*.

I refer the General Author of Scandal on the other Side, to farther Remarks, but take notice of these first, because they are the Manufacture of a Party, that do not use to deal in that Commodity; and whose Cause, did they rightly adhere to it, stands not in need of any such weak Support; a Refuge of Lyes has always been the mark of another Side, and I would fain have it be the peculiar of those People, who have so long had the Title to it, I do not love Invading of Properties, and as the other Party can plead the oldest Title to the Practice of Lying in Print, I would e'en

e'en have had them held it, nay, tho' they made a Monopoly of it, but it ſeems Envy will not permit them that Priviledge.

I have ſometimes wonder'd at the Folly of thoſe People, who are ſatisfy'd in Lying, if a Printed Lye will but hold *one Day*, and tho' it be detected the next, they think it worth while to go through with it: but now I am Convinc'd of the Uſefulneſs to them, of this Way of Lying, tho' it be but for a few Hours: How often has a formal *Lye* come hot out of the Oven into *Exchange Alley*, ſerv'd the Intereſt of the Contrivers, to the tune of 2 or 3 *per Cent.* in the Price of Stocks, between 9 a Clock and 2? And tho' it has been cold again before Night, nay, tho' it has been trac'd in thoſe few Hours, How have the Managers made it Anſwer all the Ends of Truth to them? Sold their Stocks off at a good Price, and ſtand and laugh at you into the Bargain? Nay, make the Advantage of the very detecting their own Forgery, and make a ſecond Gain, by buying in Cheap, what before, they ſold out 2 or 3 *per Cent.* dearer.

In Politicks it is the ſame; A LYE, like General *Groveſtein* in his late Expedition into *Champaign*, if it gets but one Day's March, it ſpreads ſo ſwiftly, and runs ſo far, Truth can never overtake it, and this is the Way that this kind of bare-fac'd Lying becomes Uſeful—How Bloody and Barbarous? What a dreadful Thing was it, ſays an Hundred poor well-meaning People, to burn the poor Creatures that were fled into the Church for the Safety of their Lives, and not let them come out when the Church was on Fire? Why, ſays another, did you not hear that it was a meer Lye, and that our Men had no Hand in any ſuch Thing?——No, indeed I never heard a Word of that, I thought it had been true; thus the Miſchief of a Lye ſpreads: So Poyſon ſearches into every Pore, and finds its Way through all the *Meanders of the Blood*, and tho' an Antidote well apply'd, may follow it ſo effectually, as to preſerve the Life, and drive it out of the Vital Parts; yet it's ſecret Paths cannot always be trac'd, where it works and breaks out; thus often, if the Man eſcapes, he loſes his Hair, his Nails, his Teeth, and ſometimes his Senſes: Thus a Lye ſpread but this Hour, tho' it be detected the next, and openly Contradicted, yet the Diffuſion cannot be ſtop'd, and the Infection ſpreads, whither the Cure can never reach; Slander and Reproach is juſt the ſame kind of Thing, and a Lye once Publiſh'd upon the moſt Innocent Man in the World, all his Innocence ſhall never prevail, but he will, for Ages after, have ſome of the Reproach left, and perhaps ſhall have it break out like a freſh Wound, when all his Defence, ay, and Defenders too, lie buryed too deep in Time, to have them riſe again for his Deliverance—— Fifty Year hence, the Duke of *Ormond* ſhall be branded with Cruelty, in burning alive 270 poor Innocent People in a Church, when it ſhall be in no Man's Power to ſay whether it were true or no.

How

How many well-meaning People to this Day positively charge the Memory of King *William* with Innocent Blood, as they call it, and with Cruelty in the Affair of the *Glence*-Men, when the just Vindication of his Conduct in that Case, is forgot, or has not been seen by them.

Ages to come will have cause to Reproach the Men of this Generation, with leaving such Magazines of Scandal and Forgery, and so far Separated from the true Accounts of the same act, that they will not be able to know from our Testimony, when they speak Truth, or Report Lies.

In the Decay of Trade, occasioned by the War, *Lying* is taken up as a New Manufacture, for the Employment of the Poor; and as we were very good at Improving before, we are in a fair Way now to be Esteem'd as good at Inventing; in a few Years more, there is no doubt but this New Manufacture may arrive to greater Perfection, and may be fit for Exportation; mean time, if her Majesty pleases but to Encorporate the present Remarkable People, who are set up for Proficients in this New Undertaking; some of the Authors of the present Age, whose Works stand every Day upon Record, in their Favour, ought to put in for Nomination, as Governours and Directors of the *Lying Company*, for the first Year; as to Precedency among them, whether *Protestant* or *Pagan*, *Flying Posts*, *Lying Posts*, *Medleys*, *Examiners*, *Plain Dealers*, or what else shall stand foremost, be it to them as they Merit, I leave that to Justice.

Advertisement to the Gentleman who wrote two Letters to the Author, Sign'd Curtius.

Sir,

HAving desir'd leave to send a Friendly Answer to your two Letters, it seems you must have some other Reason, why you will not be answer'd, than what you give, since it is easie for you to order a Letter to be left for you, under any Name you please, and at any strange Place you please, so as to render it impossible to be known; but if you are not backward in being convinc'd of the wrong you do, or being peaceably satisfied that no wrong is done You; upon your Order, a Letter may be left for you at the Printers hereof, which any Messenger that you please to send, shall have, and be ask'd no Questions —— So all your needless Caution shall be gratify'd; and if this is not Satisfactory, you must pardon the Author for Ranking you among those many good People, which send him Letters they are afraid to see an Answer to, least they should be Convinc'd —— I assure you, Sir, the Answer you would Receive, would be nothing like what you seem to expect from,

Your Humble Servant,

Review.

*** The Reader is desir'd to Correct the following Error in our last but one, *viz.* Pag. 823. Col. 1. Line last but one; for *that, I think*, r. *but that, I think.*

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